

California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program

N E W S L E T T E R

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UPDATE

AUGUST 15 - SEPTEMBER 15, 1999

Power Grid and Land Use Policy Draft Released

On September 13, 1999, the California EMF Program released the Power Grid project draft report and computer software models produced by Decision Insights, Inc. for review by our stakeholders and interested members of the public. Copies of the report may be ordered from Krishna Copy Center for the cost of copying (580-14th Street, Oakland, Calif.; (510) 763-0193); when contacting Krishna Copy please ask for the "California EMF Program Power Grid and Land Use Policy Project" report. The draft executive summary and some introductory materials will soon be on our Web site at www.dnai.com/~emf.

Written comments on this draft must be postmarked by November 3, 1999. To help people prepare their comments, Program staff and members of the contract team will be available to answer questions at a workshop on October 22, 1999. Details of this workshop appear below.

October Meeting and Workshop

The next Stakeholders Advisory Committee meeting will take place on Thursday, October 21, 1999, from 10 am to 4 pm. The meeting announcement and agenda will be available in early October.

On Friday, October 22, from 10 am to 4 pm., the Program will hold a workshop to answer questions about the Power Grid and Land Use Policy project report and provide participants with an opportunity to become familiar with the project's software models. Program staff

and members of the development team will be available at this meeting.

Both events are open to the public and will be held in our office at 1515 Clay Street 17th floor, Oakland, California 94612 (the Elihu Harris State Office Building). For more information about these meetings or to RSVP, please contact Maria Giron at (510) 622-4430.

Report to the California Public Utilities Commission

Due to the need to keep to our schedules for completing the draft Power Grid and Land Use Policy project and the Risk Evaluation Guidelines, we have not yet completed responding to the comments we received on the draft report to the California PUC. We are currently revising the report based on the comments we received, and are finishing the memo responding to the comments.

Public Comments Received on Risk Evaluation Guidelines

We have received comments on the Risk Evaluation Guidelines from our stakeholders, the public, and members of our Scientific Advisory Panel. We appreciate the time all of the commenters took in preparing detailed and thoughtful comments, most of which were submitted before the final deadline. We are currently assembling a document that will incorporate all of the line-by-line comments, facilitating their integration into a new draft. We are also assembling the general comments so that we can address them systematically, and are beginning our revisions. These comments will form an integral part of the next version of the Risk Evaluation Guidelines.

School Policy Project Update

Brock Bernstein, of the School Policy project development team, has informed the Program that the draft report and computer models for this project will not be completed until near the end of this year. After we receive these materials, Program staff will conduct an internal review to ensure that they are ready for distribution. If so, we hope to be able to release the materials for stakeholder and public review early next year.

Welcome to Patrick Levallois

Patrick Levallois will be working with the California EMF Program for the next nine months. Patrick is a Canadian physician specializing in public health, and is also a professor at Laval University in Quebec. He has worked for ten years as an environmental health consultant for the Quebec public health department, with a focus on EMF. Patrick is currently on sabbatical leave at U.C. Berkeley until June, 2000. He will spend part of his time with the Program researching electrical hypersensitivity and will also work on the Program's public health risk evaluation.

Research Unit Progress

Risk Evaluation Guidelines: The Program received numerous comments on the draft Guidelines. Staff have read and organized these comments in preparation for the review and revision of the draft, which is now underway.

School Policy Analysis: The progress on the Local Briefing Document has been delayed by other pressing demands on Asher Shepard's time. Keith Florig is addressing some technical problems in the models and continues to work on the draft Narrative for Statewide Policy-makers. We have asked him to expand this narrative to include additional analyses that we had planned to conduct as part of the Policy Integration project. We feel that this may be a more efficient and credible way of handling them, even if it further delays completion of this project.

We now expect to have all four deliverables (the computer model, the model documentation, the Narrative for Statewide Policy-makers, and the Local Briefing Document) around the end of the year for internal review, and hope to release drafts for stakeholder and public comment early next year.

Power Grid/Land Use Policy Analysis: The draft final report, with the ten related computer models and several appendices, has been made available for stakeholder and public comment. The report includes additional analyses requested by Program staff that were not included in the original scope of work. While waiting for public comments, Detlof von Winterfeldt and his team have begun responding to some Program staff requests.

One staff suggestion was to clarify with Phil Pettingill of the Independent Systems Operator the significance of the outage and duration figures for overhead and underground transmission lines in California, because there were two typos in the row pertaining to the underground 69 kV lines. The corrected figures are available upon request. The California data provided by the ISO suggest that the frequency of outages is lower for underground lines than for overhead lines in the same voltage category. Because of the longer duration of outages for underground lines, however, only underground 69 kV and 115 kV underground lines have lower expected outage times when compared to above-ground lines.

Epidemiology Workshop: Staff are continuing to edit the discussions from January's workshop. Three papers have been submitted for publication.

Prospective Miscarriage Study: De-Kun Li and his team are now ready to analyze the data. Program staff have been discussing the merits of different analysis strategies.

School Exposure Assessment Survey: Luciano Zaffanella has begun revision of the draft report in response to the peer reviewers' comments. Tim Brindley, an electrical contractor, has submitted his review of the labor and costs involved in net current mitigation, and compared his results to the estimates provided in the report. The engineering consultants for this project are developing a common scope of work, timeline, and budget to benchmark the powerline mitigation costs in this report.

California Exposure Analysis: Program staff have asked the contractor, Dan Bracken, to deliver the results of some additional analyses of the data collected for the Prospective Miscarriage study. No further work on this project is anticipated, unless it is required for the Risk Evaluation.

Occupational Exposure Study: Mike Yost and his team have completed the data collection and are now working on a final report.

Policy Integration: This project is still in the planning stages. As mentioned in the description of the School Policy project, above, it is becoming clear that including some of the work that was expected to be part of the Policy Integration in the two Policy Analysis projects instead will result in greater efficiency and credibility of the analyses.

Risk Evaluation: Contractors, Program staff, and other DHS scientists are continuing their review and preliminary evaluation of the literature, to the extent that this can be done before finalizing the Risk Evaluation Guidelines.

EMF Program Library: We now have a comprehensive set of literature on EMF, which will be used by staff and contractors working on the Risk Evaluation. We are now obtaining more recent publications and will continue to monitor the literature for further publications in the field. This work is mainly the responsibility of the Program's Research Assistant, Webb Sprague.

Education and Technical Assistance Unit Updates

Supporting the Release of the Power Grid Project

The Education Unit assisted the Research Unit by preparing announcements, cover materials, and distribution lists for the Power Grid and Land Use Policy project draft materials which were mailed to stakeholders on September 13. Education Unit staff also commented on the draft report and executive summary, suggesting ways to make the report more clear and understandable to members of the public. Some of these suggestions have been incorporated into the current draft, and others may be considered in future revisions.

Web Site

Education Unit staff have been working with a consultant to prepare an updated and restructured version of our Web site. Over the past month, staff have reviewed the pages and structure of this new site as it was being developed, and recently began a review of a full working model of the site to ensure the accuracy of the content and ease of use of the site.

In August, Program staff began recording the number of people visiting our Web site. We have had between 200 and 250 viewers each week since starting tracking. The information accessed most often between mid-August and mid-September is the Program's short factsheet and Risk Evaluation Guidelines.

Response to Stakeholder Questions and Comments

This month, Education Unit staff completed the memo responding to stakeholder comments on the processes for completing the Risk Evaluation Guidelines and the policy projects. In addition, unit staff drafted a memo responding to comments from stakeholders on the draft report to the CPUC, based on an earlier discussion of these comments with Research Unit staff. The Education Unit has also planned and scheduled the next meeting of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee and responded to questions about this meeting.

Other Recent Activities

Education Unit staff responded to numerous questions received from members of the public about the possible health effects of EMF. We receive such questions on an ongoing basis by telephone, e-mail, and regular mail. This month, we received questions by e-mail from as far away as Australia and telephone calls from California residents, state and local officials in other states, and many others.

This unit has begun working on a new Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet aimed at people with concerns about EMF in their current or possible future residence. We believe that this it will fill a need for information on the possible health effects of EMF in homes.

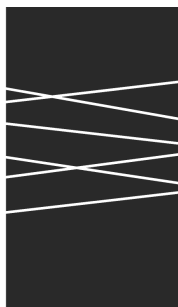
Education Unit staff continue to take the lead in producing the California EMF Program's monthly newsletter. Staff also help in planning the schedules for the completion of the Program's projects, with a major focus on ensuring public involvement.

EMF PROGRAM STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

note Raymond's new email address

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See us on the Web <http://www.dnai.com/~emf>